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593 and a man with many years' experience in Irish rural affairs,
428 attempt to give a statement of the generalities. They express, however, an ideal rather than an actuality.

The average household consists of six persons [and the parents]. Of necessity not more than one could be provided for on the holding and assuming, for example, that the family consisted of two girls and four boys, the position would be somewhat as follows:

593 The eldest son would in the course of years assume ownership
428 of the holding. A second son might be provided with a second-
874 ary education and might possibly win a County Council scholarship . . . enabling him to pursue a course of engineering or medicine practically free. In the event, however, of his not being so fortunate, the thrift of the family may enable him to pursue a similar course at the university, the intervals between terms and the long vacation being spent on the farm.

Some years ago medicine was the profession usually pursued provided the boy had no vocation for the priesthood. At that time the cost of his board was appreciably reduced by an arrangement through which neighbors' sons lodged together and brought with them supplies of potatoes, oatmeal, home-cured pork, in fact, provided for almost all their own food. When the boy is qualified to his own particular calling, to his credit it may be said that he denies himself many little luxuries in order to pay back the cost of his training and thus assist the other members of his family.

593 The third son either got trained in business and in due course
428 started one of his own, or emigrated where he could also refund the cost to his parents. The fourth son might possibly become a primary school teacher, a civic guard, a tradesman [artisan] apprenticed by his father in the near-by town, or again his family might give him enough to marry into another small holding.

One of the girls received a dowry or, as they say here, she was "fortuned off" into another small holding of similar status. The second girl possibly favored nursing, teaching, business, or domestic service, or again possibly religion, or even a clerical position of some sort either here or abroad.

166 The above quotation states the generalities in terms of
463 upward social mobility. The influx of the country people
593

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into the towns, into governmental, professional positions, and into the ranks of urban occupations must wait for special analysis in itself. It is not possible here to determine how great the effect of this movement from the small farms is upon the current much lamented overcrowding of the professions in Ireland. The point of interest for us is the dispersal of the farm group.

Naturally enough, this dispersal does not always occur so happily as in the above statement of the ideal. Yet the portioning off of the children and the success with which it is done is the pride as well as the duty of every farm family. A few examples will give the variations. They are more matters of success or failure to advance beyond the level of small farm life, but they show the genesis of the movement in the farm family. In a later section this subject will be dealt with in more detail. These examples, however, are typical, though the names are fictitious.

Leary of F —, a farmer with sixty acres, has a daughter married near-by with a four hundred pound fortune, and another, a nun in Mercy Convent, Ennis. Four sons have entered the priesthood, an expensive training from his point of view. A fifth is at home working, not yet thirty. Leary is a "strong" farmer, highly prosperous.

Tom Casey, K —, is a very poor holder with thirty acres of mountain and bog. Two sons and a daughter are still at home, and a bachelor brother works with him. Another daughter works for herself as a domestic servant in Ennis. One son Tom is apprenticed to a carpenter in Ennis. A daughter emigrated through the good graces of her aunt.

Michael Dunn of T — has twenty acres, but has not prospered. His two sons left at eighteen and twenty respectively to drive hackney automobiles in Ennis, an uncle there giving them a start. Another son now thirty and a daughter are still at home working the farm.

In a mountain townland, Pat Looney's father prospered, won the good graces of the landlord's agent, amassed four farms, the largest fifty acres, the smallest eighteen. He married off two

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183 581 554 In these histories, when a countrywoman explained that she or someone she knew had married from bad land into good, or paid a larger dowry than she might have, had she stayed in her own townland, she referred to a movement that was quite readily discernible in her parish. She had experienced, and took pride in, a natural wedding of desire and ambition, which combined, for her as an individual, the instincts of a woman to be wife and mother and the demands of her group's advancement in the systems of familist alliances that made up her community. This was the individual side of the matter. Many indeed were the farmers and their wives who were careful to specify to us how successful a match had been in carrying a larger-than-might-be dowry to better land. One might grumble perhaps about one's lot, if there were anything to grumble over, but in such a case one might be proud that one had assured one's children of a better farm and a better standing than one's own.

166 581 But there was a social side of the matter which showed that this ambition was not a merely personal thing. For in the parish in which we gathered detailed information an interesting statistical movement could be seen. This movement was reflected in the geography of the district.

Marriages since 1864 in this parish have shown a tendency to move brides from the westward out of the poorer lands eastward toward richer farms. The parish happens to lie between higher, poorer soil to the westward and a more fertile area to the east. One must know the local topography and the fertility of the soil to understand the details of the movement. But its over-all tendency is statistically clear. None of the marriages among small farmers and their fellows have taken place (if they took place in the County at all) beyond a six-mile range of distance between the farm married-out-of and the farm married-into. In all cases the movement is small. Yet, small as it is, it shows a distinct tendency. In general, the higher and more westerly town-

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lands of the area made up of this parish and the contiguous parishes are the townlands from which marriages have moved brides outward. These same higher and more westerly townlands are also the ones that have lost population fastest and have been marked by the highest rates of celibacy. Since 1860, at least, families of this area have consistently paid higher dowries to establish their girls on better lands nearer urban and shopping centers. These families have married their daughters along the country roads downward and eastward, from the higher, poorer, more westwardly townlands to the better lands in lower and more eastwardly ones. Relatively speaking, there has been no movement of brides in a reverse direction. By comparison with the better lands, the poorer farms have done without brides for their young men. These poorer farms are the ones, then, who have seen their families "die out of it."

This is merely the evidence from one small parish and its neighbors. But it is instructive that it corresponds with the picture for Ireland as a whole, as the marital statistics of the censuses reveal it. Late marriage, celibacy, the marked preponderance of males in the sex ratio, are all phenomena of the western and poorer farming districts of the country.

Neither the establishment of a peasant proprietorship in the years of agrarian reform since the Land War nor the remarkable growth of prosperity among the farmers since the nadir of famine times has had any success in reversing the long-persistent trend of population decline in the countryside. They have had no effect either, it seems, upon the demographic phenomena associated with that decline. Perhaps the reason for the persistence of the trend despite all changes lies in the considerations revealed by the study of the matter in one small parish, as we have just described them. The acquisition of better lands, the growth of a greater rural prosperity, and the opening up of new opportunities at home have gone hand in hand with a persistence

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of social sentiments and forms of social organization shaped entirely within the familism of the small farmers. The new opportunities have appeared first and foremost as means for personal and group advancement within the existing social and familist order.

One could hazard that the census figures represent not an "economic problem" in the sense of a flight from poverty or a fight against its restrictions but the movement of a population seizing upon new opportunities and new prosperity without relinquishing at any point the already existing organization of their social sentiments and habits. In such a view the problems of population decline in Ireland are results not of poverty but of prosperity.

However that may be, there is a close parallel between the opening of opportunities for education and for rise into the professions, the ranks of business in the Irish towns, and government, all taking place since 1870, and the demography of the small farmer class. The children of the small farmers have flocked through the doors opened to them into every walk of Irish life. They continue to do so today. The towns and their occupations continue to grow and grow, but the countryside does not. The process is one by which the long delays in marriage, the restriction of children to the few who can be well provided for, and the fierce centering of family ambition in the occupational status of its members, more usually thought of as urban, petit-bourgeois phenomena, have spread outward in to the countryside and overtaken the small farmer on his farm. The mobility of a changing, democratized social order, capable of recruiting the ranks of one class from the children of another, has been combined with the fixity, the conservatism, and the rigidity of an ancient and still vital familism. It should be said that Ireland is not unique in this recombination of elements of social organization. She is unique in illustrating so well, in her special way, a social process universal in the countries of Western European civilization.

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It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted.

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world.

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure

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182 584 593 Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" was profound sociology. Life in organized society is a drama. In the match, even though the marriage of one principal is the theme, the action includes the whole cast. Internally, the action forcibly and finally changes the interrelations of all the characters; externally, the parts they play to the audience alter and grow. The changes must run their course till the action resolves itself in the crystallization of a new situation; and the act is over.

It is this dramatic quality which gives the sociologist and the social anthropologist the right to use such terms as 'structure', 'dynamics' and 'equilibrium'. He has that right in describing the life of the countryman. The match brings changes in dramatic completeness. It forces the relationships of the constituent human beings into a new equilibrium and creates a scaffolding for new behaviours and sentiments.

182 593 166 Let us look at the external change first. The sons and daughters who must travel are forced out of the closely knit group in which they once had their being. Yet, unless they emigrate beyond hope of call, they do not drop out of sight. The sentiments of years of close association do not die out. It has been a matter of pride and duty with the farm father to provide well for his children. Wherever he can, he has found them an opening. He has sent them into the towns, into the shops, the professions, the trades, and into the Church. As in nearly

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all modern countries today, there is in Ireland a great and constant flow of population from country to city. Much of this is made up of the farm sons and daughters.

Yet, they do not always go to the towns, of course. The farm father tries to settle them on the land round about him, too, as we have seen. In either case, nevertheless, they are not lost to the new family which supplant them on the farm. They are merely removed a single step. They have become 'friends'. They are part of the extended kinship system which stretches from the farm-house door. They owe the obligations of kindred which we saw in farm work; they are the uncles and their children the cousins of the new generation in the home farm.

Out of this sort of expansion Irish kinship is built. The point of integration is the farm father and mother, whose relinquishment of command forces dispersal. Projected backward and upward through the generations, to common grandfathers and great-grandfathers, this transferred remembrance of the duty and sentiment between father and son unites ever wider circles of descendants in the ties of brotherhood. It provides a scaffolding for the behaviours of 'friendliness' and 'cooring' between members of contemporaneous generations. In it each man has a place, reckoned upon 'blood' as he calls it. With the word, a social structure of interwoven habit patterns and emotional

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is created. A pathway is created along which human lives can move and play out their roles in social life. One of the farmer's sons can hope, with luck and affluence, to become a shop-assistant in the market-town. The portion he receives upon the dispersal of the farm family may well take the form of such a start in life. The farmer-father pays the boy's apprentice bond.

Formal apprenticeships still flourish in Irish country towns and nowhere better than in the shop or pub. The country boy is bound in custom and in law to his new employer and learns the alien way of business and social habit under a master's eye. Eventually he may succeed to a shop of his own, but first he 'must serve his time'. In this, rural Ireland has preserved an older form and charged it with its own peculiar content. The town-bred lad is seldom hired; he brings no rural kindred with him. Then, too, he is neither so impressionable nor so easy to control. The country lad, at first, is both. The shopkeeper taps the social order of the countryside in the person of his fledgling 'prentice boy.

But time brings ordered change in social life, in the town no less than in the countryside. The boy grows up; he serves his time. He acquires the experience and the technique which fit him for the role for which his parents paid his apprentice bond. Unless he is to retain a subordinate and unimportant place as shop-assistant for a lifetime, he must move on. He must acquire a shop himself.

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369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.
571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher